

## Letter to the Fire Chief's re: Fire and EMS Consolidation Study

Thank you to those in attendance at the October 14<sup>th</sup> fire chief's meeting in Menomonee Falls. I really appreciated all of your input on a potential fire and EMS consolidation study. For those of you who were not able to be at the meeting, I wanted to take a moment to fill you in on the purpose of the study, my reasoning for supporting the concept, and where we are going from here.

Last month, several community administrators in the Lake Country area approached me about studying consolidated fire and EMS service areas within Waukesha County. The goal of a study would be to find ways to maintain or improve these services while identifying efficiencies. After talking with the communities, we selected 18 municipalities with which we began a conversation about funding a study.

The reason for not including all Waukesha County municipalities in a single study was two-fold. First, as you know, Waukesha County has varying levels of fire and EMS service. The communities I've engaged have similar service levels or natural geographic associations. The second reason is cost. Consultants are expensive. In my 2016 Waukesha County Executive Budget I have included \$50,000 for a consolidated fire and EMS study. I believe, when combined with funding from municipal partners, this will adequately fund a study of the selected communities. So far, the response has been positive. I have received commitments of at least \$10,000 from nine individual communities and additional potential partners will be making a decision in the coming weeks.

Several attendees at the meeting questioned why we wouldn't expand the geographic area of the study to the whole county. While I am open to the concept, and am willing to listen to all parties, I am not sure that this funding would cover the cost of studying the fire and EMS services of 30 different fire departments/service areas. That being said, I cannot predict the bids we will receive in response to an RFP, and I will not rule out the possibility that, under a favorable bidding environment this, or a future study, could include additional community partners.

This study is the first step in what I believe will be many steps in this process. The underlying question I need answered is *"is there a better way to provide the same or greater level of service to our citizens while becoming more efficient?"*

In the near future I will be reaching out to the leadership of the Waukesha County Fire Chiefs Association asking that a member of the group participate in the RFP process to select a consultant for the project. Your voice in this process is very important to me. I want to keep the lines of communication as open as possible as we move forward with the study and beyond.

If you have any questions regarding this process please feel free to contact my office directly at 262-548-7902.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Farrow". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

PAUL FARROW  
Waukesha County Executive

Cc: Local Municipal Leaders